

The Day We Give Thanks



How the Great Home Holiday Came to Be Established—First Celebration in America an Inspiring Commentary on the Pluck of the Pilgrim Fathers. National Observance Began With Proclamation by Abraham Lincoln.

FOR many years past the president of the United States has proclaimed the last Thursday in November as the day the nation should give thanks. Thanksgiving day this year falls on the 28th of this month, and the feast of thankfulness which the Puritans observed in the early days of our history will be celebrated in the homes of hundreds of thousands of Americans.

Thanksgiving day is appropriately termed a home holiday. It is the time for family reunions, at which the old folks usually preside. It is then that the plum pudding, cranberry sauce and the symbolic turkey are the main part of the dinner the country over.

The peculiar feature of Thanksgiving day—the reconsecration of the home—was not always its most prominent characteristic. As its name implies and as the national proclamations state, its purpose is to give thanks to God for the peace that reigns over the country and for the abundance that has crowned our harvests. This is its ostensible object, yet almost unconsciously this purpose has become secondary to the idea of home and of home gatherings. The religious meaning may have no less significance, but as the nation has increased in size and families have been widely separated the home element has gained in importance.

PILGRIMS' THANKSGIVING
It is almost 300 years since the first Thanksgiving in America. The little colony at Plymouth, to all appearance, had scant occasion for rejoicing. Nearly half their number had died, and those who remained must have looked forward with inexpressible dread at the thought of another winter of bitter New England weather. But religious ardor kept their hearts warm, and with thankfulness they gathered in the little harvest. Twenty acres of Indian corn had been planted and six acres of barley and peas. The peas were a failure, the barley was indifferently good, and the corn, "God be praised," yielded a supply sufficient to allow each individual a peck of meal per week. This was their cause for thanksgiving. To celebrate this harvest worthily and that they might "after a more special manner rejoice together" Governor Bradford sent four men out fowling. They killed in one day as much as served the company almost a week. The festivities lasted for some days, but in the midst appeared, as unexpected guests, Chief Massasoit and his hungry Indians, whom they entertained for three days. Round their necks were suspended their knives in scabbards of wampum. Two edged trenchant knives, with points as sharp as a needle.

Whatever poverty might suggest against entertaining this hungry horde, policy dictated the most generous hospitality. The guests, however, made themselves at home, not only by sharing the provisions, but by taking part in the labor, bringing in wild turkeys and venison, for the place abounded in these.

The first Thanksgiving, then, was of the nature of a harvest home festival. **DATES USED TO VARY**
There is no evidence that Thanksgiving day was a stated annual oc-

currence among the colonies. Thanksgivings were appointed as occasion suggested, sometimes at one season sometimes at another. Record is made of the appointment in July, 1623, for a day of fasting and prayer for rain, and while the people were praying rain came in abundance, whereupon the governor of Massachusetts appointed a Thanksgiving, which was observed with religious services. On the other hand, one appointed in 1661 was "for stopping the bottles of heaven and restraining the excessive rain." Gradually the tendency in the New England colonies was for an annual Thanksgiving day soon after harvest—a custom that was occasionally observed in New York and other states.

Thanksgiving day was first a national institution during the Revolution, but after the general thanksgiving for peace in 1784 there was no national appointment until 1789, when Washington, by request of congress, recommended a day of thanksgiving for the adoption of the constitution. At the close of the Revolution there was a disposition in New York to make the day a regular institution, and John Jay in 1795 issued a proclamation for Nov. 11. The act met with opposition. It was claimed that Governor Jay was seeking to flatter religious prejudices for party purposes.

Up to the time of the civil war the official recommendation of Thanksgiving day was confined chiefly to New England. On the Sunday preceding the appointed day the formidable document, with the big red gubernatorial seal, was unfolded, covering almost the entire pulpit. To the younger members of congregation it was a matter of peculiar interest. It meant a red letter day and thoughts of turkeys and mince pies mingled with divinity as the minister with frosty breath read the proclamation. When he came to the close and lifted up his eyes to heaven, saying, "God save the commonwealth of Massachusetts," it seemed as if Massachusetts were bigger than the entire universe besides, and as if it were under the special favor and protection of God. The Thanksgiving sermon, which in point of merit aimed to surpass all other sermons of the year, always touched upon politics—lightly, of course, and not with too much definiteness, for slavery was not then a thing of the past, and New England had mercantile relations with the south which rendered the slavery question a delicate one. There were exceptional cases, but in the main it was not the New England clergy who aimed the deadly blow at slavery—it was the New England poets, Whittier, Longfellow, Lowell and the others.

JEFFERSON'S OBJECTIONS
Not infrequently there have been protests against the right of civil authorities to appoint days of religious fastings or festivals. It is maintained that this is a strictly ecclesiastical function, and as such is an interference on the part of the state and contrary to the spirit of the constitution. On this ground Thomas Jefferson refused to follow the example of Washington. He said: "I consider the government of

the United States as interdicted by the constitution from intermeddling with religious institutions, their doctrine, discipline or exercise. Fasting and prayer are religious exercises; enjoining them is an act of religious discipline. Every religious body has a right to determine for itself the time for these exercises and the objects proper to them, according to its own peculiar tenets, and this right can never be safer than in their own hands, where the constitution has deposited it. Civil powers alone have been given to the president of the United States, and he has no authority to direct the religious exercises of his constituents."

During the civil war President Lincoln issued proclamations for special Thanksgivings. Since his time the institution has been national and annual. It is said that President Grant on one occasion issued a proclamation inviting the people to celebrate the Fourth of July by religious observances. This was an innovation which the people at once recognized as an interference. Thanksgiving day was countenanced by custom and allowed to pass, but few would be disposed to permit further infringement on the rights of the church. President Grant evidently forgot his own advice to the people, given only a few months before in his memorable speech at Des Moines, "Keep the church and the state forever separate."

Even if the sentiment should prevail that the appointment of a day for thanksgiving is no part of the function of a state, there can be no objection to the appointment of a day for a harvest home festival, which indeed is the real significance of the day at the present time. Almost every nation has had a feast of this character.

A UNIQUE PROCLAMATION
Since the first recorded Thanksgiving proclamation by the court of Massachusetts, though many of them have been promulgated, the form remains largely the same. The nation, state or municipality is admonished of the propriety of giving thanks. Many times special events are mentioned, but usually they are couched in high sounding terms and brief platitudes. Occasionally, however, the form varies and becomes conspicuous therefor. In 1880 Governor Atkinson of West Virginia startled the country by his proclamation. In a few brief lines he called upon the people of his state to observe the day and appended twenty-five texts of scripture, all bearing upon the subject of giving thanks.

Congress by special enactment in 1870 made the fourth Thursday in November of each year a legal holiday in the District of Columbia and the territories of the United States. Similar legislation has been enacted by all the states and the large cities.

To whatever extent Thanksgiving day may have changed as a religious observance, its social side remains stable. Prayer may have given way to sport, as some say, in these modern days, but the feasting is just as much a feature of the occasion as when Governor Bradford shared entertainment with old Massasoit at Cape Cod.

TOO SHORT THE DAY.

There's just one thing disturbin' me
This glad Thanksgiving day.
When I my blessin's come to count
An' all my mercies—say,
It seems to me the day's too short
By 'bout six weeks or so
Fer me to pay the debt o' thanks
Thet I most surely owe!

I've plodded through the passin' months
With blessin's loaded down,
A hidin' bitterness at heart
An' wearin' of a frown,
A-makin' of myself believe
Thet I was sore oppressed,
When really I, more than most men,
Have by the Lord been blessed.

I lumped my assets in a bunch
An' thought them mighty small,
But when I take them one by one
I scarce can count them all.
An' when I look about an' see
Thet I possess—wail, I declare,
I strike the other track!

The things we'd miss if we were called
To part with them—ah, they
Are things for which we should give thanks
With swellin' hearts this day!
An' few there be thet takin' stock
Accordin' to this plan,
Will find the day half long enough
Thet blessin's all to scan.
—Arthur J. Burdick.

Squaring the Circle.

The squaring of the circle was banned by the French Academy of Sciences so long ago as 1775, when this body decided that it would reject all correspondence on the subject. A distinguished French military officer, who believes that he has solved the problem, is so anxious that his discovery should reach the world through the proper channel that he has served the president of the academy with a legal notice to cancel this decision.—University Correspondent.

Old Hungarian Thanksgivings.

In Hungary thanksgiving days or something analogous to them used to be common, but have now passed away except on rare occasions of national rejoicing. Then a horse race of a particularly exciting description takes the place that football occupies in American observance of the real thing in the way of Thanksgiving celebrations.

TRUTH.

To Truth's house there is a single door,
Which is experience. He teaches best
Who feels the hearts of all men in his breast
And knows their strength or weakness through his own.
—Bayard Taylor.

Unreasonable Expectations.

If it be asked, What is the improper expectation which is dangerous to indulge? experience will quickly answer that it is such expectation as is dictated not by reason, but by desire, an expectation that requires the common course of things to be changed and the general rules of action to be broken.—Dr. Johnson.

A Useful Period.

"Some employers seem to think that old men won't do for business these days."

"Why not?"
"Pace too fast, I guess."
"Well, I don't know. When they get too old to be interested in canoes or mandolins or fancy vests I find 'em pretty good for work."—Chicago Journal.

The Older Fashion.

Mrs. Shortley was discussing the latest fashions with a young lady caller.
"Did you say your husband was fond of those clinging gowns, Mae?"
"Yes; he likes one to cling to me for about three years."—Lippincott's.

He's Stuck on the Job.

"No matter how long the ballot is, there's one man in our block who doesn't mind handling it."
"Well, who is he?"
"John Paste, the paper hanger, of course."

Fame.



Cholly—Arthur is becoming quite a literary man, don't you know?
Willie—Indeed! What has he written?
Cholly—He sent the editor a list of the guests at his dinner, and the editor printed it, bah Jove!

Delightful Prospects.

"We ought to have a most interesting year with our card clubs."
"That so?"
"Yes; three of last year's members are suing for divorce."

Not Worthy of Mention.

"How is it I never hear you say a word about your old college days?"
"The college I went to didn't have a very good football team."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Grist From the Sport Mill

By STADIUM

The Olympic games in Sweden were a great financial failure, not less than \$243,000 having been lost by the organizers, according to the final auditing of the accounts. From the standpoint of good sport the games were acknowledged to have been well conducted. Good order and system were characteristic of the program from day to day. But this good management meant heavy cost, and the promoters of the affair find themselves facing this great deficit. This amount does not include the cost of the stadium.

The whole income from the stadium, including season tickets, was slightly more than \$270,000. On the day of the Marathon \$22,788 was taken in at the gates, and adding to this the season tickets for that day the income was \$34,128, which is the largest sum ever taken in Sweden for a public affair.

Sweden is not disheartened by the deficit, as it was expected from the start, and the country feels well repaid in having shown the world the high degree of her sportsmanship and management.

Sir Thomas Lipton, the English yachtsman, has offered a valuable trophy to be raced for by motorboats in the annual New York Athletic club's Block Island race next June.

The association of football with Thanksgiving day arose in the colleges of the country about twenty-five years ago, when it became the custom to set that holiday as the time for playing the great deciding games. Now it marks the end of the football season, and each year there is a great outpouring to witness the final contests.

Intercollegiate football showed that the new rules will bring about the equalization of the defense and attack which the rulemakers aimed at last fall.

The unrestricted forward pass is sure to bring about an extensive development of the possibilities of that play, and the pass is being tried quite generally by most of the teams which held aloof from it during the last few seasons because it was a dangerous and uncertain manner of advancing the ball. The unrestricted forward pass has probably done just what football men expected it would do—open up the defense and give a greater chance for a shifting attack. While the forward pass was restricted to a twenty yard zone and also the onside kick, the defense was concentrated in this limited area. Now it has been spread out, and there is a much fairer chance for the rushing game.

This year's game has shown that football is going to be a much improved athletic spectacle to the spectators' point of view. There will be

plenty of open play, with rushes outside of the tackles and ends. The successful teams this year must have a variety of plays, and, unlike the old game, the plays will not be started from a limited area in the back field. There are numerous shift formations and various kinds of attack to draw out the defense. In last year's game the attack was so evident that the defense had plenty of time to prepare for it, and for that reason the rushing game failed completely under the old code. With four downs in which to gain ten yards this season, an offense may be developed which will keep the defense constantly spread out.

The great football game between the Army and Navy teams takes place Nov. 30 on Franklin field, Philadelphia.



Photo by American Press Association.
Leland S. Devore, Captain of the Army Football Eleven.

phila. Captain Devore of the Army team, who was chosen as the All American tackle last year, is the tallest tackle on any of the big teams and is exceptionally fast in the game. Last year's game was won by the Army, with a score of 3 to 0.

Savannah, Ga., may try to get the automobile road races back next year, according to Arthur W. Solomon, secretary of the Savannah Automobile club.

Laughs 'Twixt Turkey Bites

Apt Description.

"That man is not a very good logician, but he is a most impressive talker." "Yes," replied Senator Sorghum; "he is what the musicians refer to as a performer with more temperament than technique."—Washington Star.

Any More?

First Neighbor—Have you heard tell of them newfangled trial marriages?
Second Neighbor—I don't see nothin' newfangled about 'em. Mine's been a trial to me for the last twenty years!—Judge.

A Cold Deal.



Physician—Did you take the man's temperature?
Student—I think I did. I put him on ice.

A Jovial Friend.

The Artist—I think I've got a good joke this time—what!
The Editor—You're right. It is a good joke. I always laugh at this one before I reject it; done it for years.—Sketch.

Proves That Men Are Hounded!

Peck—You will never get the dog to mind you, my dear.
Mrs. Peck—I will with patience. You were just as troublesome yourself at first.—Boston Transcript.

Envy.

"Let the Indians handle money in order to make them independent," says a government order. Lots of housewives wish they were Indians.—New York Sun.

An Architectural Marvel.

Sport—Why do you call your horse Pisa?
Cabby—Because he always looks like he was going to fall down, but he don't.

Making His Importance Clear.

"Mrs. Jipes, I think I have heard you say you have a cousin in the regular army. He is an officer, I presume?"
"Yes; he holds some responsible position, but I don't exactly know the nature of it. When he wrote to me last he said he was in the guardhouse—whatever that is."—Chicago Tribune.

To Be Expected.

"It seems to me that after some of these trusts have dissolved," said the puzzled citizen, "they prove to be harder propositions than ever."
"That," replied Professor Hibrow, "is but natural. A great many substances after they dissolve immediately proceed to crystallize."—Washington Star.

Unpopular Concession.

The Vicar (announcing "outing" for mothers' meeting)—We shall assemble at half past 9, and—er—you may bring your husbands. Chorus of Mothers—Oh, but we want to enjoy ourselves!—Punch.

No Doubt About It.



Watson—Do you think young Brown is serious in his attentions to our daughter?
Mrs. Watson—Yes; I overheard him asking her whether you are a member of the firm or only work on salary.

Cause of Dislike.

Parks—I don't like that woman.
Marks—Why not?
Parks—She's the woman who is all the time teaching my wife a new way of serving up cold meat.

In Passing.

Townley—How's the new cook getting on?
Subbubs—I don't know. She didn't leave her address.—Boston Transcript.